

# Providing Support When It's Needed Most

Since 2012-2013, the Center has offered one Carolina graduate student a yearlong fellowship to support their dissertation research and writing. The fellowship allows the students to focus entirely on their dissertation, which improves the quality of the work and also helps ensure a timely progression to completion. This fellowship has been made possible by generous donations to the Center—including multiple, short-term expendable gifts and limited unrestricted funds—and is a unique opportunity for students to receive a full year of support during their later years at Carolina.

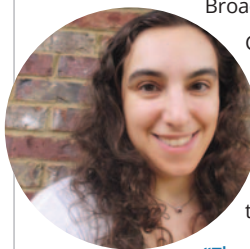
The Center has supported talented scholars with a wide range of dissertation topics ranging from late Roman and Byzantine pottery, to post-war economics of Soviet Jewish communities, to medicine and politics for physicians in Israel.

Currently, the Center seeks a permanent endowment or long-term expendable fund to support this fellowship annually.

"For 10 years we have made this fellowship a top priority at the Center, which often means directing our limited unrestricted funds to this purpose," added Ruth von Bernuth, director. "As the Center approaches its 20th, and then 25th anniversaries, we would love to have a permanent source of funding for this fellowship so that there is never any hesitation or concern about offering this truly meaningful opportunity to a highly-promising graduate student."

Please contact us for additional information at [jewishstudies@unc.edu](mailto:jewishstudies@unc.edu).

The Center's first-ever fellow was **Naomi Graber**, then a Ph.D. candidate in the department of music, who was working on her dissertation titled, "Found in Translation: Kurt Weill on Broadway and in Hollywood, 1935-1939."



Graber's dissertation earned her the Glen Haydon Award for an Outstanding Dissertation in Musicology and she is currently writing a book on Kurt Weill's American career, which is forthcoming with Oxford University Press. She joined the faculty of University of Georgia in 2013.

"The fellowship meant a great deal to me. It gave me the time I needed to complete my dissertation, including research that led to my first journal article. That article led to a temporary academic position, which has since become permanent," said Graber. "I will always be grateful to the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies for providing the support I needed early in my career."

Currently, **Max Lazar**, department of history, holds the fellowship, and he plans to defend his dissertation—which is a local study of Jewish integration in Frankfurt am Main between 1914 and 1938—this semester before embarking on a teaching career.



"In a time of great uncertainty, the Goodman Dissertation Fellowship has provided me with one of the rarest resources one can find: time," said Lazar. "There is no doubt that my dissertation has grown in quality thanks to this opportunity from the Center."



Next academic year, **Miguel Vargas**, department of religious studies, will hold the fellowship to focus on his dissertation which examines the history, historical consciousness and culture of a little-known Jewish community in Egypt by means of its prophetic literature.



Brad Erickson leads a tour through his virtual synagogue.

## Emerging Scholars Lecture Series

New this year, the Center has launched a series of short, academic talks featuring Carolina graduate students. The students gave a brief overview of their research and fielded questions from the audience. The community benefits from hearing about new research interests in Jewish studies, and the students gain important career skills.

If you missed the events, you can view them on our Vimeo site and YouTube channel. Visit [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu) for details and links. The Center plans to offer several similar talks—which are free and open to the public—next academic year.

Early this semester, a group of our graduate students met for an online conversation about how the Center has impacted their careers at Carolina. To watch the conversation, please visit our web site.



The first meeting of the Undergraduate Advisory Committee for Jewish Studies was held last fall under the direction of **Andrea Cooper**, associate professor, department of religious studies and Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Scholar in Modern Jewish Thought and Culture. Several undergraduate students are meeting regularly to create programs that will bring together students interested in Jewish studies courses, the major and the minors. Their first event was a remote movie watch party in November.

In January, the Center hosted its annual Holocaust Remembrance Day event, but for the first time, the event was held remotely. Speakers included **Karen Auerbach**, associate professor and Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat Scholar in Jewish History, department of history, along with several UNC graduate students: **Robin Buller**, **Max Lazar**, **Alison Curry**, **Morgan Morales**, **Alma Husejka** and **Oskar Czendze**.



The Uhlman Distinguished Scholar Program for 2020 featured **Christopher Browning**, the Frank Porter Graham Professor Emeritus and professor emeritus of the Center. This special event provided new historical perspectives from one of the leading global experts on Nazi Germany, the

Holocaust and the demise of democracy in Europe during the 1930s. If you missed the event, video is posted on the YouTube channel for Carolina Public Humanities.



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

# The Value of Friendship

### Ruth von Bernuth, Director

Seymour and Carol Levin Distinguished Professor  
Professor, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures  
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This past year, many of us have felt a very real loss in friendship, and have realized just how important it is to have friends and family in both our everyday lives and our special celebrations. At the Center, we have all felt this loss too, of course, as faculty and student relationships have been put to the test with more than a full year of mainly remote instruction. We have had success in maintaining these connections through online tools, and I am so proud of all the extra efforts that faculty have made to reach out to Carolina's students. Nevertheless, we are all very eager to have everyone safely back on campus for fall semester, and we will dedicate ourselves to making sure we are all fully reconnected.

We have also kept our connections with the general community, and thanks to the nature of online events, I am happy to report that we have even made many new friends from across the United States and around the world. This has been so successful that in future years we will continue to offer some programming through remote online tools, so we don't lose our newly formed friendships and to strengthen our entire network of community members.

Since I became director of the Center, one of the most rewarding aspects of the job has been

meeting all of you, the "friends of the Center." One meeting that stands out for me is the afternoon I spent, in October 2018, with Seymour, '48, and Carol Levin (pictured above). I had just been named the founding Seymour and Carol Levin Distinguished Professor, and I wanted to meet them and personally thank them for their support of me, and in truth, of all our faculty and students. Seymour was one of the windows into Carolina's past and I enjoyed so much hearing from him. I was very sad to learn of the passing of Seymour in early March, as both I and the Center have lost a remarkable friend.

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You are all true friends of the Center, and without you, we really wouldn't have a Center for Jewish Studies on this campus. Your friendship and support makes everything possible. As we approach what I hope will be a transition to a "new normal," one thing that will not change is how much the Center is the product not only of faculty and students, but also of alumni and neighbors, who all share the same goal: to explore the rich history of Jewish studies.

I hope you can reconnect with your friends this summer and I am looking forward to renewing our friendship in person (hopefully) this fall.



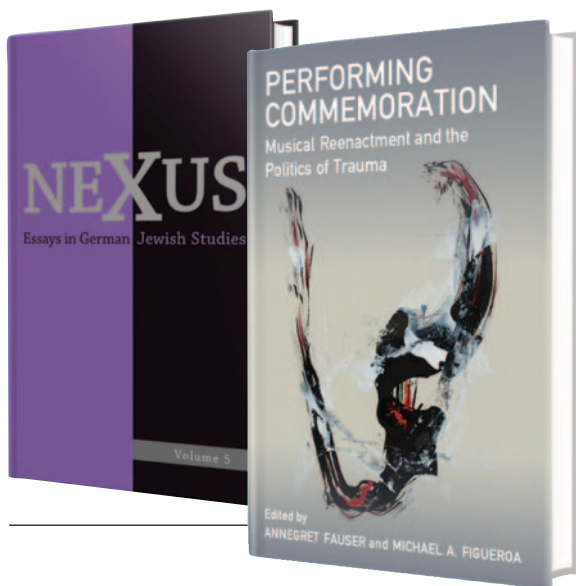
# Leadership in Jewish Studies Research

Three recent conferences held at Carolina—Performing Commemoration, Moments of Enlightenment and Wandering Objects—have led to academic publications, showcasing the Center’s ever-growing leadership role in Jewish studies research and programming. For each publication, the talks given at the various conferences were

used as a starting point for the revised articles that went through a peer-review process.

It was just five years ago that the Center held its first-ever multiday academic conference—Reconsidering Antisemitism—which was quickly followed by several other special events. The Center’s ability to host events with international and interdisciplinary speakers is a milestone achievement in the overall evolution of the Center and the reputation of Jewish studies at Carolina. This year, the Center is beginning the planning process for future conferences, hopefully starting in 2022-2023, the Center’s 20th anniversary year.

Meanwhile, our recent conferences now have publications available/in production and also have videos posted on our Vimeo site. Visit [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu) for links to the publishers and the videos.



## THANK YOU!

Please accept our gratitude for all the generous gifts made to the Center during the University’s Giving Day in late March. Details on our Giving Day activities will be shared in the next edition of this newsletter. The Fund for Jewish Studies provides unrestricted support that is essential for the Center to maintain its reputation for excellence while expanding its academic and public outreach programs for future generations. Donations made to the Center also count toward the Campaign for Carolina. To make your gift, you can use the enclosed gift envelope to mail in your check or use the online giving form found on our web site: [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu).

## Faculty Share Research

Our faculty continue to share their research with colleagues, students and the general public.

Last month, **Yaron Shemer**, associate professor, department of Asian and Middle Eastern studies, led a book launch hosted by Cornell University.

Last semester, **Jodi Magness**, Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism, department of religious studies, sat down with Monocle & Spade and NC Bookwatch to talk archaeology and Second Temple Judaism. →

**David Lambert**, associate professor, department of religious studies, was recently featured on The Biggest Questions, a podcast produced by the University of Chicago Divinity School.



## SPRING 2021 NEWS FROM THE CENTER

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# Exploring Digital Archives

Students enrolled in JWST 480/FOLK 481: Jewish Belonging/s: The Material Culture of Jewish Experience normally work on a final group project with material objects that becomes an exhibit displayed at the Center's

office in Pettigrew Hall. But given the remote instruction format offered this fall semester, the class instead worked with a digitized and unexplored special collection in the Southern Historical Collections in Wilson Library—the family papers of Alice and Georges Lurcy.

Throughout the semester, the class mined the papers for the Jewish story of this Southern/French/Jewish family, and in particular, its connection to Jewish material culture as documented in letters and inventories. Students also interviewed Lurcy family members, on Zoom, and students incorporated that material into their projects.

The course was led by Gabrielle Berlinger, assistant professor in the department of American studies and the Babette S. and Bernard J. Tanenbaum Fellow in Jewish History and Culture. She partnered with staff experts in Wilson Library to create this research project and to make remote instruction truly meaningful and productive for Carolina's students.

In the end, the class produced a web project about Jewish experience and material culture based on this family archive. Visit <https://tarheels.live/lurcystory/> to view the classroom's site.

